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JANUARY

VOL.
24

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PART 134

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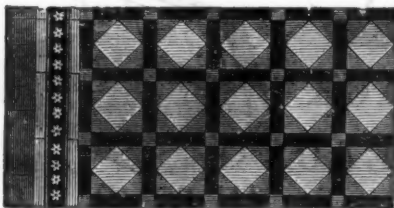
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THE DUKE'S CHILDREN.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER XXV. A FAMILY BREAKFAST-TABLE.

LORD SILVERBRIDGE had paid all his Derby losses without any difficulty. They had not been very heavy for a man in his position, and the money had come without remonstrance. When asking for it he was half ashamed of himself, but could still find consolation by remembering how much worse had befallen many young men whom he knew. He had never "plunged." In fact he had made the most prudent book in the world; and had so managed affairs that even now the horse which had been beaten was worth more than all he had lost and paid. "This is getting serious," he had said to his partner when, on making out a rough account, he had brought the major in a debtor to him of more than a thousand pounds. The major had remarked that as he was half-owner of the horses his partner had good security for the money. Then something of an unwritten arrangement was made. The Prime Minister was now one of the favourites for the Leger. If the horse won that race there would be money enough for everything. If that race were lost, then there should be a settlement by the transfer of the stud to the younger partner. "He's safe to pull it off," said the major.

At this time both his sons were living with the duke in London. It had been found impracticable to send Lord Gerald back to Cambridge. The doors of Trinity were closed against him. But some interest had been made in his favour, and he was to be transferred to Oxford. All the truth had been told, and there had been a feeling

that the lad should be allowed another chance. He could not, however, go to his new Alma Mater till after the long vacation. In the meantime he was to be taken by a tutor down to a cottage on Dartmoor, and there be made to read—with such amusement in the meantime as might be got from fishing and playing cricket with the West Devon county club. "It isn't a very bright look-out for the summer," his brother had said to him, "but it's better than breaking out on the loose altogether. You be a credit to the family, and all that sort of thing. Then I'll give up the borough to you. But mind you stick to the Liberals. I've made an ass of myself." However, in these early days of June, Lord Gerald had not yet got his tutor.

Though the father and the two young men were living together they did not see very much of each other. The duke breakfasted at nine, and the repast was a very simple one. When they failed to appear, he did not scold, but would simply be disappointed. At dinner they never met. It was supposed that Lord Gerald passed his mornings in reading, and some little attempts were made in that direction. It is to be feared they did not come to much. Silverbridge was very kind to Gerald, feeling an increased tenderness for him on account of that Cambridge mishap. Now they were much together, and occasionally, by a strong effort, would grace their father's breakfast-table with their company.

It was not often that he either reproached them or preached to them. Though he could not live with them on almost equal terms, as some fathers can live with their sons, though he could not laugh at their fun or make them laugh at his wit, he knew that it would have been better both

for him and them if he had possessed this capacity. Though the life which they lived was distasteful to him—though race-horses were an abomination to him, and the driving of coaches a folly, and club-life a manifest waste of time—still he recognised these things as being, if not necessary, yet unavoidable evils. To Gerald he would talk about Oxford, avoiding all allusions to past Cambridge misfortunes; but in the presence of Silverbridge, whose Oxford career had been so peculiarly unfortunate, he would make no allusion to either of the universities. To his eldest son he would talk of parliament, which of all subjects would have been the most congenial had they agreed in politics. As it was he could speak more freely to him on that than any other matter.

One Thursday night as the two brothers went to bed on returning from the Beargarden, at a not very late hour, they agreed that they would "give the governor a turn" the next morning—by which they meant that they would drag themselves out of bed in time to breakfast with him. "The worst of it is that he never will let them get anything to eat," said Gerald. But Silverbridge explained that he had taken that matter into his own hands, and had specially ordered broiled salmon and stewed kidneys. "He won't like it, you know," said Gerald. "I'm sure he thinks it wicked to eat anything but toasted bacon before lunch."

At a very little after nine Silverbridge was in the breakfast-room, and there found his father.

"I suppose Gerald is not up yet," said the duke almost crossly.

"Oh yes, he is, sir. He'll be here directly."

"Have you seen him this morning?"

"No; I haven't seen him. But I know he'll be here. He said he would, last night."

"You speak of it as if it were an undertaking."

"No, not that, sir. But we are not always quite up to time."

"No; indeed you are not. Perhaps you sit late at the House."

"Sometimes I do," said the young member, with a feeling almost akin to shame as he remembered all the hours spent at the Beargarden. "I have had Gerald there in the gallery sometimes. It is just as well he should know what is being done."

"Quite as well."

"I shouldn't wonder if he gets a seat some day."

"I don't know how that may be."

"He won't change as I have done. He'll stick to your side. Indeed, I think he'd do better in the House than I shall. He has more gift of the gab."

"That is not the first thing requisite."

"I know all that, sir. I've read your letter more than once, and I showed it to him."

There was something sweet and pleasant in the young man's manner by which the father could hardly not be captivated. They had now sat down, and the servant had brought in the unusual accessories for a morning feast. "What is all that?" asked the duke.

"Gerald and I are so awfully hungry of a morning," said the son apologising.

"Well, it's a very good thing to be hungry; that is, if you can get plenty to eat. Salmon, is it? I don't think I'll have any myself. Kidneys! Not for me. I think I'll take a bit of fried bacon. I also am hungry, but not awfully hungry."

"You never seem to me to eat anything, sir."

"Eating is an occupation from which I think a man takes the more pleasure the less he considers it. A rural labourer, who sits on the ditch-side with his bread and cheese and an onion, has more enjoyment out of it than any Lucullus."

"But he likes a good deal of it."

"I do not think he ever over-eats himself—which Lucullus does. I have envied a ploughman his power—his *dura ilia*—but never an epicure the appreciative skill of his palate. If Gerald does not make haste he will have to exercise neither the one nor the other upon that fish."

"I will leave a bit for him, sir—and here he is. You are twenty minutes late, Gerald. My father says that bread and cheese and onions would be better for you than salmon and stewed kidneys."

"No, Silverbridge—I said no such thing; but that if he were a hedger and ditcher the bread and cheese and onions would be as good."

"I should not mind trying them at all," said Gerald. "Only one never does have such things for breakfast. Last winter a lot of us skated to Ely, and we ate two or three loaves of bread and a whole cheese at a pot-house! And as for beer, we drank the public dry."

"It was because for the time you had been a hedger and ditcher."

"Proby was a ditcher, I know, when he went right through into one of the dykes. Just push on that dish, Silverbridge. It's no good you having the trouble of helping me half-a-dozen times. I don't think things are a bit the nicer because they cost a lot of money. I suppose that is what you mean, sir."

"Something of that kind, Gerald. Not to have money for your wants—that must be troublesome."

"Very bad indeed," said Silverbridge, shaking his head wisely, as a Member of Parliament might do who felt that something should be done to put down such a lamentable state of things.

"I don't complain," said Gerald. "No fellow ever had less right to complain. But I never felt that I had quite enough. Of course it was my own fault."

"I should say so, my boy. But then there are a great many like you. Let their means be what they may they never have quite enough. To be in any difficulty with regard to money—to owe what you cannot pay, or even to have to abstain from things which you have told yourself are necessary to yourself or to those who depend on you—creates a feeling of meanness."

"That is what I have always felt," said Silverbridge. "I cannot bear to think that I should like to have a thing and that I cannot afford it."

"You do not quite understand me, I fear. The only case in which you can be justified in desiring that which you cannot afford is when the thing is necessary; as bread may be, or clothes."

"As when a fellow wants a lot of new breeches before he has paid his tailor's bill."

"As when a poor man," said the duke impressively, "may long to give his wife a new gown, or his children boots to keep their feet from the mud and snow." Then he paused a moment, but the serious tone of his voice and the energy of his words had sent Gerald headlong among his kidneys. "I say that in such cases money must be regarded as a blessing."

"A ten-pound note will do so much," said Silverbridge.

"But beyond that it ought to have no power of conferring happiness, and certainly cannot drive away sorrow. Not though you build palaces out into the deep, can that help you. You read your Horace, I hope. 'Scandunt eodem quo dominus minas.'"

"I recollect that," said Gerald. "Black care sits behind the horseman."

"Even though he have a groom riding after him beautiful with exquisite boots. As far as I have been able to look out into the world——"

"I suppose you know it as well as anybody," said Silverbridge—who was simply desirous of making himself pleasant to the "dear old governor."

"As far as my experience goes, the happiest man is he who, being above the troubles which money brings, has his hands the fullest of work. If I were to name the class of men whose lives are spent with the most thorough enjoyment, I think I should name that of barristers who are in a large practice and also in Parliament."

"Isn't it a great grind, sir?" asked Silverbridge.

"A very great grind, as you call it. And there may be the grind and not the success. But——" He had now got up from his seat at the table and was standing with his back against the chimney-piece, and as he went on with his lecture—as the word "But" came from his lips—he struck the fingers of one hand lightly on the palm of the other as he had been known to do at some happy flight of oratory in the House of Commons. "But it is the grind that makes the happiness. To feel that your hours are filled to overflowing, that you can barely steal minutes enough for sleep, that the welfare of many is entrusted to you, that the world looks on and approves, that some good is always being done to others—above all things, some good to your country; that is happiness. For myself I can conceive none other."

"Books," suggested Gerald, as he put the last morsel of the last kidney into his mouth.

"Yes, books! Cicero and Ovid have told us that to literature only could they look for consolation in their banishment. But then they speak of a remedy for sorrow, not of a source of joy. No young man should dare to neglect literature. At some period of his life he will surely need consolation. And he may be certain that should he live to be an old man, there will be none other except religion. But for that feeling of self-contentment which creates happiness—hard work, and hard work alone, can give it you."

"Books are hard work themselves sometimes," said Gerald.

"As for money," continued the father, not caring to notice this interruption, "if

it be regarded in any other light than as a shield against want, as a rampart under the protection of which you may carry on your battle, it will fail you. I was born a rich man."

"Few people have cared so little about it as you," said the elder son.

"And you, both of you, have been born to be rich." This assertion did not take the elder brother by surprise. It was a matter of course. But Lord Gerald, who had never as yet heard anything as to his future destiny from his father, was interested by the statement. "When I think of all this—of what constitutes happiness—I am almost tempted to grieve that it should be so."

"If a large fortune were really a bad thing," said Gerald, "a man could I suppose get rid of it."

"No; it is a thing of which a man cannot get rid—unless by shameful means. It is a burden which he must carry to the end."

"Does anybody wish to get rid of it, as Sindbad did of the Old Man?" asked Gerald pertinaciously. "At any rate I have enjoyed the kidneys."

"You assured us just now that the bread and cheese at Ely were just as good." The duke, as he said this, looked as though he knew that he had taken all the wind out of his adversary's sails. "Though you add carriage to carriage, you will not be carried more comfortably."

"A second horse out hunting is a comfort," said Silverbridge.

"Then at any rate don't desire a third for show. But such comforts will cease to be joys when they become matters of course. That a boy who does not see a pudding once a year should enjoy a pudding when it comes I can understand; but the daily pudding, or the pudding twice a day, is soon no more than simple daily bread, which will or will not be sweet as it shall or shall not have been earned." Then he went slowly to the door, but, as he stood with the handle of it in his hand, he turned round and spoke another word. "When, hereafter, Gerald, you may chance to think of that bread and cheese at Ely, always remember that you had skated from Cambridge."

The two brothers then took themselves to some remote part of the house where arrangements had been made for smoking, and there they finished the conversation. "I was very glad to hear what he said about you, old boy." This of course came from Silverbridge.

"I didn't quite understand him."

"He meant you to understand that you wouldn't be like other younger brothers."

"Then what I have will be taken from you."

"There is lots for three or four of us. I do agree that if a fellow has as much as he can spend he ought not to want anything more. Morton was telling me the other day something about the settled estates. I sat in that office with him all one morning. I could not understand it all, but I observed that he said nothing about the Scotch property. You'll be a laird, and I wish you joy with all my heart. The governor will tell you all about it before long. He's going to have two eldest sons."

"What an unnatural piece of cruelty to me; and so unnecessary!"

"Why?"

"He says that a property is no better than a burden. But I'll try and bear it."

A SEED-FARM AT FLOWERING TIME.

"NEMOPHILA? Yes. It is. We have fourteen miles of nemophila."

A long stretch of the pretty little blue flower was being walked by when this calm remark was uttered (bringing some momentary doubt of its serious meaning).

And where was the nemophila?

In a far away district on the Essex coast; low down in its most eastern part, where a grey line of sea is just to be seen to the south, faintly, broken by the jut of a martello-tower, and, may be, the slow grey spot of a passing sail.

It is reclaimed marsh-land down there. It is a peninsula fifteen miles across; rich and light by continual deposit. The river Stour is sucking and soaking at its north; with Harge (Harwich) placed at its sandy and sluggish mouth. The river Colne is sucking and soaking at its south; with Kirby-le-Soken, Thorpe-le-Soken, Walton-le-Soken, with Moose, and other places, to tell the nature of the soil, or lapping water. As a whole, the low and flat expanse has the Naze, and Mersea Island, and Horsey Island, and Pewit Island, and Skippers Island, has more isles and islets, clustering thickly by it. And, coming now closely back again, the place where the nemophila is growing is a village; the Saxon-named, sandy, and snug Cice, or Chich, St. Osyth.

It is an unexpected place in which to

find a mass of brilliant-blooming flowers. For one thing, it lies far from the screech and crash of railroads. "Fifty years ago," says Philip Morant, M.A., writing in 1768, "it was very much covered with wood and full of foul and bushy ground;" twenty years ago, it can be said, writing at this present day, it had so over-many of ever-recurring springs, to bubble up and cover the land with water, that dogs, straying unawares upon it, were entrapped and drowned. From the gates that lead to the nemophila and other carefully-sheltered flowers, a stone could be flung out towards old St. Osyth Priory (founded as a religious house in 1118), and could give a good hit against its patched flint walls. Further still, in old St. Osyth village, on which peace and sleepy tranquillity and extreme old-worldism seem settled for ever, steadily. Yet from the reclusive little place, streams out a whole tide of commerce and correspondence and enterprise and energy. It streams out, with a fulness and vigour intense and surprising, straight into a spot where commerce and correspondence and enterprise and energy are scarcely ever absent for any moment of the night or day. This is High Holborn, London—a contrast, truly. From a house there, the Messrs. Carter's, are sent out these Essex flowers (when they have done with their hey-day of flowering, and have ripened into seeds) by all imaginable conveyances, into all imaginable portions of the globe, comprising botanical gardens in the colonies, and royal parterres in European cities; comprising Government grounds and college lawns, show-farm enclosures and recreation pieces; with these lying at places as far distant as New Zealand and Kohat, as Lord's Cricket Ground and Poona, as the Agricultural Museum at Buda-Pesth and the Legation premises at Tangiers. Stirred at all this network of dealings with foreign countries and climates and systems and languages, it is delicious to turn to the far-away country scene; it is delicious to find sun, and soft air, and an infinite breadth of sky, playing over sixty acres of flowers contentedly.

But, still, fourteen miles of nemophila! Was that fact, or a flight of imagery?

It was to be accepted in perfect faith, clearly. Coming, as the announcement did, from one of the owners of the pretty little star-capped blue flower, this should, from the first, have been considered good groundwork for credibility. And fourteen miles was the right quantity, taken with

professional deduction, or, in other words, by seedsmen's measure. This is a mode that calculates drill by drill, in the many repetitions of it. It goes up one and down one, from straight end to end, in all the sowing's width, till every plant has been trodden by, and pulled, and laid there, in little sheafs or cocklets, to be turned, and sunned, and wheel-barrowed away, dry, for harvest. Measurement of the sort would make an acre field of wheat, reckoned up similarly, with every row of its ears passed by unfaillingly, come to about seven miles; measurement of the sort would make a ten-acre field of wheat (as an example of no unusual size) entail a walk, in the whole of it, of as many miles as seventy. But, say this is a method that reduces the spread of the low-lying nemophila to half an acre square, to a quarter of an acre, and it remains prodigious. Alongside of this one item, too, is a quarter of an acre (a good many miles again) of *Viscaria cardinalis*. It is *cardinalis* because, like a cardinal, its most stately life is in a crimson cloak; and there it is, every one of its cloaks upwards though, like a ruby-headed beaker, much more appropriately, and with the ruffling of the light sea-breeze making it look a living sheet of flame. Adjoining immediately is a perch or two of pure snowysnapdragon, the *antirrhinum*. Then comes a large square spread, a rood, perhaps, of carmine candytuft. The scath of the weather is on it here and there, the wounds and scars of a long damp cold spring and summer, leaving a bare patch at intervals upon the edge, that hinders the rich red from being as near a (painter's) carmine as it might be; but seen a yard or two away, where the plants are in their thick abundance, the hue is "true," as seedsmen's phrase is, the name is justified.

There is blooming next, a rood or near it, of *Leptosiphon roseus*. It is a charming little flower, a low mass of rosy stars in compact clusters. It is hardy, as is known.

"Ay, 'twould be sharp weather to kill it," says Robert, the gardener. He has a calm, parental knowledge of his flowers; they are his family; he has a sage and certain mastery of all their whims and capabilities.

Yet weather, in spite of care and calculation, will show the strength and rule of it, if it can find it possible. Here is a witness to this in this patch—of a perch, perhaps—of Prince of Wales's feathers. It is dwarfed, spare, dark; starved, indeed

(for a flower-farm's specimen, where every plant is a prize), and miserable.

For the feather seeds have been sown long enough since for each plant to have been two feet high by now, and a mass of blood-red sportiveness and "show;" it is only the disloyalty of the wind and gloom that makes them as they are. The glory of the whole sight is back again though at a huge plot (a big sized gardenful) of Mandarin eschscholtzie, tinted orange and scarlet (not amber), in fine blending, the richest at the core; at a plot of white saponaria, like round growths of clear rock coral, regularly arranged; at a plot even more extended (it measures half, an acre), of ruby king nasturtiums; at a plot of *Nycteria salaginoides*, a miniature sweet-william, or fairy pink; at a King Theodore nasturtium, nearly black; at a sheet of delicate rhodanthe, tall, and fair, and aerial, with its pale, shell-like, and everlasting heads; at wide stretches of asters in many colours; at double zinnias, in bright amber, in pure white; at an expanse, going far and far away, and rising in a slope at the lengthy distance, of pillar-like and hyacinth-like larkspur, in lilac, rose, cream, sulphur—a rood or so of each—and, in all, thirteen different hues.

"Robert," the gardener is asked, at a momentary stop at one juncture of this floral review, "where's your strength?"

"The other side." It is answered with a smile.

"And strength is not equal to stratagem, is it?"

"No;" with the smile still there, and the fatherly cognizance of children's ways and habits; also the fatherly consideration.

It is not a joke. For a second it had seemed so; but Strength and Stratagem, it appears, are peas—garden-peas for eating; and Strength is a wonder, but, by art, or stratagem, its wonders were able even to be increased, and the name was used at the christening to distinguish it, and was thenceforth put to service and adopted.

And what a pea it is! Huge, full, fat; a wide dwarf (as dwarfs are), at burst-point with plethora.

It is not vine-like, or hop-like, that is, laddering itself up through a labyrinth of bush-twigs, till the mass is level with the looker's eyes. Its growth is low, flat—no higher than a cabbage. And it is this of necessity. For "market-gardeners won't stick," the representative explains; giving

the further explanation that market-gardeners must have a pea that, once set, will want no attention; since attention means men, and men mean money, and money means that the price of a peck of peas must go up accordingly.

"Pick us a pod, Robert."

Robert does. At least, everybody picks a pod; everybody cr—acks open a pod; everybody is busily counting the nut-sized peas, in their magnificent row of colour and regularity, then to be seen inside.

"How many?" That is the cry, at the close of this, in emulation. "How many? How many?"

It is seven; it is seven; it is seven—till in one pod the number is eight, till in another it is nine, and the interest strengthens. To immediately succeed this is the wonder as to the number of pods on each plant or haulm.

A visitor, of the roving sort, unemployed, plucks a "sample" up by the roots unsparingly; holds it high.

It only measures a foot and a half, and it bears a dozen pods. There is a pluck up, then, of another. It is a little higher, six inches higher, perhaps; in all it reaches to two feet, and it bears fourteen pods.

It brings congratulation.

"Off a couple of plants you could get a peck!" cries the unemployed.

That is not a fact, of course. It is only meant as a pleasant indication of a fact; the same being that vastly little stooping would be needed to get a peck-measure full of these peas to its top and over-heaped, as vegetable dealers overheap, for housekeepers' purchasing.

Only, it must be recollected, this growth of Stratagem and Strength, and the growth of any other of the varieties of peas on this seed farm, have nothing to do with fruiterers' shops and morning marketing. The price to which they reach is a proof of this. From their present condition they have to be threshed out and winnowed; they have to be harvested and put into bags and sealed packets, and, then they will be seeds, not plants, and they will sell (these choice kinds) for half-a-crown a pint. It is curious to think of peas grown only to be sown. It is curious to think that not one of these peas will be eaten by any body; neither from this crop or another; though the Messrs. Carter paid a hundred guineas themselves, on one occasion, for a bushel of pea-seeds, and though they own

a thousand acres of garden-peas altogether; having a group of acres in this county, and a group in that, under care of farmers who can spare land to rear them in, on hire. Unless, indeed, eating is to be recognised in the sort of eating that is going on with the scientific part of the visitors now, who are applying the test of taste to increase their treat of sight, and who are looking at one another as they taste critically.

Can you tell me the flavour?

It is asked of the visitor likely the best to know.

But flavour is a matter of comparison; of solemnity; not to be settled in a too light manner, off-handedly.

"The age," says the visitor gravely, as reminder. "Can't tell, you know, without the same age. It is important."

From which it is obvious that peas stand on quite as far-off and elevated a pedestal as wines; that peas are as worthy of respectful treatment as years of vintage, as brands, beeswings, crusts, or so forth.

Besides the peas there is an immensity of other equally inviting matter. Here is a wide mass of tawny calliopsis; panther-like, brown and gold. Here are masses of heart's-ease, one nearly black, the "Beauty of St. Osyth"—a name that might be given to all the "sorts;" from those beginning at the farm gates to those at the farthest sweet-briar hedge. Here is another mass, of broccoli; gone to seed, or it would not get a look amidst the beauty; but samphire-like now, in its slender emerald and sappy twigs, that might be cylinders of coral, for branch-effect and crispness. Here is a large, long spread of musk. Here is a clean, and comic, patch—say a rood—of onions, in their seed period; their white heads nodding to one another. A hundred acres more of them are about, at one farm and another, the children of the same owners, to be as well secured. Here are large growths of verbena; pure, wax-like, beautiful; but not grown in half the areas that they used to be; since there are fashions in flowers as well as in more likely things, and verbenas are being deposed in favour of Phlox drummondii; roods of which are about, in the full glory of better size and cup-ship, and the full privilege of a loyally-acknowledged reign.

Here, also, are many masses of sweet pea—pure white, pure red, butterfly, the variegated sorts best known (ten acres more of them are elsewhere)—and the scent of these is so charming, it is like

walking by stores of delicious honey, as bees, whirring and settling in their buzz and burr of business, may likewise, in more tangible method, aptly testify. Here is an estate, almost, it runs so far, of Godetia Whitneyi, crimson.

"Is it true?" is enquired.

"True!" comes the answer—"truth," with seeds, or, better still, in this absolute language of flowers, meaning genuine, meaning what the title implies, not possessing a characteristic wrongfully described—"I never thought it could have been anything like so true! It's magnificent!"

For it is a lake of red-hot fire, it is all aglow, with no other shade, or taint, to dim it. And the proud gardener hears the praise bestowed, and clips some blooms off in happy memory, adding them to the nosegay that grows gayer as he goes.

Here is a mass, just a little farther, of sweet sultan—a literal cloth of gold; it is a gorgeous field of jonquil-coloured tissue, with a sweet fine fragrance, and a form as if cast in a matrix, geometrically.

"A shy seeder," is the representative's mild reproach to it, drawing his hand gently across a strip of heads.

"You see one of the gold-mines now," is said, in high approval. "There, close."

And the gold-mine is—what? The *Pilea callitrichioides*, being the artillery plant, with curious exploding pods, and a very exploding name? The *Loasa aurantiaca*, covered, like nettles, with hairs, that sting? The *Tritoma uvaria grandiflora*, often called red-hot poker (much more easily recollected!), or the *Amaranthus melancholicus ruber gigantens*, the striking Continental novelty of the year? No; no; the same no to all. In this Essex flower-life, as it is in human life, the minting work, the gold coining, is done by simples—is done by the steady endeavour always present, by the tortoise continuance—not by the flash and startle of the hare. So it is the humble wall-flower to which attention is being called. It is this velvety, bizarre, strangely-mottled, sweetly-scented, little cottage ornament that does good duty for its owners, and it gets suitable and worthy recognition.

There is near by half an acre of lobelia. It is of the richest colour; it is so deep in the blue of it, it is almost imperial purple. It is so nearly imperial purple, to record the real fact, that one little plant, to be seen close at the edge, has overstepped the bounds of blueness, and come out reddening in violet.

"A rogue!" exclaims the representative, sharply aware. And he stoops and plucks the little original up, and throws it from him, to waste.

It is summary ejection. But it is that, it seems, to which all rogues, by seedsmen's law, are subjected; as they should be. Only that a rogue amongst flowers is not a very sorry sort of a rogue (to the moralist's eye) when all has been said and done. He has only put on a livery of an unauthorised shade; he has only shown himself exactly as he is! Looked at from one light, too, a rogue may be the child on which, copying human nature once more, Father Robert may come in time to look with the warmest affection. For out of his rogues he obtains his triumphs. He may see a plant burst into bloom, the like tint of which no plant has ever burst into before; and he may by careful tending of this plant raise it into a noble patriarch, into a worthy stock, from which, in generations (of flowers), seeds may go out to enliven with fresh beauty all the gardens all over all the world. But in this seed-farm's practice experience shows that the generality of rogues are not an atom better than they should be; and there is a thick, wide, erring heap of them on this waste-piece by the seed-barn's side; a heap composed of obdurate peas and asters, of back-sliding degenerate marigolds and dianthus, of sinful candytuffs, fox-gloves, pinks, carnations (each one, to ordinary folks, a very hopeful and pleasing treasure); and, in a little while, fire will be put to them, remorselessly, and they will all be burned.

A favoured specimen is to come under notice now, driving the memory of all such unpleasant gracelessness away.

"See," says the representative. "Here is our friend Robert's youngest child."

It is a boy—that is, it has a boy's name, Sweet-William. It is a sweet-william, however, of a Goliath-like race; and, as is the St. Osyth manner, grown in similarly gigantic quantity. It has each tuft, or crown, of bloom as large as a breakfast-cup; it has each head of this the size nearly of a pink. For its colour it is a Circassian, not a Red-skin; he has his face of ivory whiteness; his rings, or circlelets, of ruby red; and these are so well-defined and shapely, he richly deserves the second title given to him of auricula-eyed.

"Is it good enough for you?"

The representative knows that it is. He

knows that the stop that is being made in front of it is for no other purpose than to drink the wonder and the beauty in, and to bring some comment on the wonder and the beauty out.

Still, Robert himself has his own little word of regret, as his vigilant eyes turn from a wide sweep to close inspection. It comes from his love for his flock, and his fatherliness and ambition for them.

"The richest colours will never open," he sighs and says, unfolding a few obstinate petals with his finger and thumb, sadly. This gives a glimpse of what their glory would be, if they could only overcome their modesty; this shows the good grounds there have been for hoping even greater things yet than have been effected; this shows, alas! how hopes founded on the best reasons often meet with disappointment.

But there must be a look elsewhere. Here is a tiny patch, of a square yard or so, for experiment, of some wonderful wheat. Here is a large sowing of foreign radish; its young seed-pods, a foot and more long, like very much pulled-out French beans, slender, lengthy, and attenuated; and these seed-pods being the edible part, instead of, as is radish-nature, the buried roots. Here is a group of June lilies; called "brandy-lilies" by country-wording, because the fair white petals of them, steeped in brandy, are good for wounds. Here is a plant esteemed for its "steel" foliage (its tint of blue metallic bloom), that Robert is told he must keep to that "habit," and that Robert decides he will keep to that "habit"—the conviction strong in him, from successful "selection" and other unrecognised Darwinisms, that the doings, colours, size, duration of his progeny, are, in a certain limited sense, pretty much at his controlling. Here is, finally, a growth of cream and roan dwarf nasturtiums, that have been twenty-five years perfecting; that Robert has watched for every spring and summer of that quarter of a century; all in patient expectation of the reward that has come to him now, when he can lead the owners up to it, and show it "true," plentiful, and of its own quaint and striking new tint and charm.

"I thought I'd lost it for a year or two," says Robert pleasantly, recalling his anxieties, and endeared to his children by the recollection.

It had appeared again, though, he goes on to say. Some of the seed must have fallen, and it came up, and he reared it,

and worked it up till he had plenty; and it can go into the market now. All new varieties must have new names, however, for them to be known by and asked for and described; and what name should be given to this?

"I had the courage to call it 'chameleon,'" says Robert. He is diffident a little; lest his christening should not be approved.

"I've had the courage to call several of them," he says afterwards, when "chameleon" has had solemn ratification. "There were that 'spotted king,' yonder, with that black blotch, or eye. There were the red blotch that I watched come, and that I called the 'spotted queen'; seeing that I did not like, somehow, to leave the king without a partner! And then there were the 'bride,' and the 'gay prince' for her; and then there is this last. And so, although I had the courage, first, to think of something different, I am glad it's nicely settled, and that 'chameleon' will do!"

Truth to say there is an immensity of occupation for soul—or put it, thought—in this business of seeds and flowers, if attention be duly given to it. It is not meant, now, what can be done in the way of commercial diffusion of seeds; in the way of organising their growth and culture; of securing the rarest kinds for this; of broad-sowing them afterwards, all over Great Britain and the Continent and the Colonies; as has been hinted at as being done on the Messrs. Carter's town premises. What is meant is the nature, the condition, the history, of seeds themselves. Seeds, to investigate the subject for a few moments, are of many kinds; of many uses. Some are curatives, or alleviatives. Some are pressed and squeezed for their juice, or oil. Some are food exactly as they are; peas, beans, all the grains (graine being merely the French for seed), nuts of all sorts, pickles (the *martynia*, *nasturtium*, *caper*), spices. Even cotton (in the same way as the skin and pulp of fruits) is only the covering of a seed, put there (in the same way still) to protect the young offspring and preserve it. Then, some seeds rise from the base of the flower, when they are called erect; some are clinging on, as it were, or climbing up, a little above the base, and are called ascending; some hang from the apex of the cavity, being called pendulous; others of them, hanging from any other point, are suspended. If there are only

a few seeds like the frequently-mentioned peas, or, for another example, like *convolvulus*, where the little receptacle for the seeds is divided into mathematically-planned apartments, exquisitely contrived for a certain number—these few, being easily counted, are said to be definite; if there is a showering quantity—like in the case of the poppy, where there is a perfect hailstorm of tiny polished missiles the instant the pod is cracked—these, being very troublesome for counting, are said to be indefinite. Another curious fact, known after patient observation, is that whereas most seeds are attached to the plant by a stalk or cord, there are some instances where this cord thickens as ripening goes on, forming a net-work or tracery, or, as it has even been called, a basket, for the safety or otherwise of its charge. It does so in the case of the nutmeg, where the extended cord becomes the mace of the grocery list; it does so in the similar case of the almond; in the passion-flower, and the *euonymus* or common spindle-tree, where it produces a superb orange mantle, clothing the seed entirely; it does so in many instances more. Where there is not this thickening, the cord dries up, which detaches the seed from its birth-place, and leaves it ready to fall. Great help comes then, as is well known, from brooks, rivers, torrents, tides, which carry seeds oftentimes many miles; from birds, the wind, clothing (in its manufactured state on man, in its natural state on sheep or cow), which also convey seeds, willy-nilly, and can claim the honour of introducing them where they have never been before. How the shape of seeds forwards this has also been mentioned frequently. Many are furnished with a kind of hook or hair, like the carrot, hemp, agrimony, burdock, which gives them a hold and lets them keep it. Some, by virtue of the elasticity of the pod that houses them, are ejected with great force far away from their parents—till they reach fresh grounds is the philosophy of it, of course, their nature requiring entire change of diet; instances of which are to be found in the touch-me-not and the spiriting cucumber. The oleander has hairs in a particular portion of it, to facilitate the little journeyings its seeds will have to go. The *bignonia* seeds and others have broad membranous expansions to them, called "wings," by which they are said to "fly."

Seeds, again, in their absolute substance and appearance, vary beautifully. Some

are round, some are oval, some are kidney-shaped, crescent-shaped, heart-shaped, cocked-hat-like or angular, flat. Some are like little chips of straw; some lie in minute rusty mounds or heaps (the ferns); some are like shot; some are wrinkled, irregularly, anyhow; some corrugated with astonishing precision and compactness; some are delicately veined like marble; some are like dust or powder, absolutely irrecoverable (without admixture) if they fall amongst sand, or on the soil. The colour of seeds, without entering on those of pure foreign growth, is also of excellent variety. They are black. They are brown, in all tones of browns; going, at one side, into bronze, orange, yellows deep and pale; going, at the other side, through gradations, till they reach a pucey-pink. They are of all greys, drabs, white; a hempen grey and a dove grey; of two greys; and speckled, and blotched. They may lie, some of them, for eight, ten, and twelve years—notably the cucumber, melon, gourd—retaining their life; the mimosa, or sensitive-plant, may lie as many years as thirty and forty; the well-known example of Sir Gardiner Wilkinson's mummy-wheat, planted after the lapse of thirty or forty centuries and growing vigorously, carries this matter as far as there is any need. Then the bags the seeds lie in, and the chambered cups, and the pods, the satin walls, the husks, the capsules—nay, the mere adhesion, like as with ferns to their homes the leaves; and the absence of any of this, the simple unprotectedness of nasturtiums, for instance, which have absolutely no covering, but drop, when the full life is in them, to become the commencement of full life again—are all provocative of study, will all give ample recompense for it.

That with all this diversity of style and sort and habit, seeds should want equal diversity of treatment—if there is resolve to keep plants up to their standard (and to reach above it) either for science or profit—is not at all wonderful. Experience shows that some seeds, for example, are best put into peat; some on heat; the potentilla in slight heat; the statice in a cold pit; the thumbergia in a strong hot bed; the Phlox drummondii in well-drained pots; Alpine Plants in shallow seed-pans; the antirrhinum in a cold frame; the tropeolum under glass. Experience shows, again, that the seeds of camellia and chorizema have to be well-soaked before sowing; so of clitoria, in luke-warm

water; so of kennèdya, in warm water also, for twelve hours; that the seeds of abronia must be first peeled; that cocoea must be sown edge-ways; that the seeds of lupin are good manure for orange-trees; that good grass-seeds produce good grass, good grass good sheep, good sheep good wool, making the best market!

Wel wiste he by the drought and by the rain
The yielding of his seed, and of his grain.

says Chaucer, in the Prologue to the Canterbury Tales; but besides the "wisting" of the drought and the rain, there has to be the "wisting" of the soil. Soils, by growers' terms, are spoken of as poor clay, fertile clay, high-lying clay, alluvial, calcareous, sandstone, light chalk, limestone, sandy, "leachy," &c. (each one having to be learnt, and accurately handled); and if these form flower-beds that are too sloping they will wash down from the upper parts, starving the seeds, they will wash down on to the lower parts, far too completely burying them. They cannot be sown in, either, again and again, year after year, for the same flowers. At St. Osyth, where there is a selection made from nearly two thousand named varieties, a plan is drawn every season making the alterations in the places for the crops that are necessary. Cowper puts this well in his Task, where he says:

He therefore who would see his flow'rs disposed
Lightly, and in just order, ere he gives
The beds the trusted treasure of their seeds,
Forecasts the future whole;

and if the result is always what it is, as seen in low-lying Essex, where the flowers, most undoubtedly, are disposed rightly, there is little surely that can be found excelling it.

Yet, let a note be made. When the unemployed's beautiful bunch of gleanings comes to be looked at by his host, one of the owners, and by the representative, they are full of banter.

"Going to take those home!" cries one. "I'd fling them out of doors!"

"Ay," says the other, as feelingly, though with a quieter manner, "for my part, I wouldn't give them house-room."

So, to live amongst jewels, does have the effect of taking away the appetite for jewellery. Which is curious.

ENTERTAINMENT MADE EASY.

Has anyone ever written an essay on "Turning-Points?" If not, let someone immediately do so. I make him a present of the suggestion.

I don't think they are pleasant things. They are milestones, to begin with; and to the philosophising—together to be distinguished, mark you, from the philosophic—mind, this is, in itself, an undesirable qualification. Still there are milestones upon which one looks back, from a not too distant view-point, at all events, with distinct satisfaction. Your first love, your first whisker, your first pair of bifurcate nether integuments, were they not, for a while at least, almost as delightful to look back upon as to anticipate? It is when the milestone coincides with the finger-post, when you turn the corner and the scene changes, and the glamour that has hung about the old accustomed country, no matter how many milestones may have been passed, suddenly refuses to turn the corner with you, and shed its false but pleasant glow over the view. That is when your milestone becomes a really objectionable institution, and this is precisely your turning-point. But I am being dishonest. I have made my unknown essayist a present of a subject, and am forthwith proceeding to mangle it myself. Let me confine myself to the one turning-point more especially in my mind; a turning-point, among the smaller of its class, as unpleasant as most.

Do you remember the time when you first fully realised the fact that giving a party was not altogether that unmixed and unmodified joy your youthful fancy had been wont to paint it? That, when completed, is the turning-point I mean.

Happily the curve, as a railway engineer would express it, is commonly one with a considerable radius. Between the moment when, as mamma's eager coadjutrix, you first awaken to the notion that awnings and dancing-cloths, and lights and music, and smooth floors and cosy corners, and supper and champagne and adoring partners, are not all matters absolutely of course, following of necessary sequence upon the simple suggestion, "Suppose we give a little dance on the 21st?" and that day of fate when papa puts peremptorily down his gouty foot, and solemnly vows that, "Confound it all! he won't have the house turned topsy-turvy in this fashion any more," there is, as a rule, a long and not uneventful interval. Before that parental pedal movement becomes really effective it is more than probable that your personal interest in these little disturbances of the parental comfort has more or less ceased, and you may even be growing to look upon domestic dissipation rather more from poor papa's

own point of view. And even then there is probably before you a very long and gradual process of disillusionment before you finally arrive at the conclusion that party-giving of whatever kind is just vanity and vexation of spirit. Your true social philosopher, your absolute connoisseur in the difficult art of *savoir vivre*, knows that the limits of his entertainments are fixed, not by his social ambitions or political or business exigencies, but by the simple scale of his every-day life; that the dining-room which will pleasantly accommodate a couple of dozen will be a sty for fifty, a wilderness for a tête-à-tête; that the luxuriously furnished drawing-room can no more be converted by any process short of absolute destruction into dancing-space for a couple of hundred, than the bare, glittering resonant ball-room can be changed by any process short of reconstruction into a pleasant social lounge; that the company which is too numerous to be cared for by his own carefully trained servants, is no more advantaged by the addition of the greengrocer or the undertaker's man, than is the menu by lukewarm messes from the pastry-cook's, or the wine carte by a forlorn dozen or two of muddy port or chilly claret hustled in from the stores. But before you arrive either at this true philosophy or at that more common spurious imitation, which for lack thereof abominates, or affects to abominate, all hospitable exertions, you have a long road to traverse. And the earlier stages of that road are sometimes pleasant enough.

I remember my first little dinner-party very well. I had just got an appointment in what was then the Ordnance Office, and was not a little proud at having begun actually to earn my own living. And by way of carrying out that laudable idea in its simplest integrity I had taken a lodging close to my work—in Pall Mall. It was a very modest lodging; only one second-floor room with a nice little alcove for my bed, quite Paris fashion; and the rent thereof was only thirty-five shillings a week. With extras, of course—indeed, very much so. But then the house stood, where the Junior Carlton Club stands now, exactly opposite the door of my office; and my salary was eighty pounds a year.

The menu of that first dinner I do not exactly remember. It was very simple I know; indeed, in the first week in April an English cuisine is necessarily somewhat restricted, and I had given special orders that there should be nothing out of the

way; just soup and fish, a couple of entrées, a joint and a bird or something, with a few peas and that sort of thing, and something sweet, you know, and a little dessert. But it was a very nice little dinner, and my landlord, who was an Italian, and a retired courier, arranged it all very nicely. I think the dessert struck me as a little extravagant perhaps for half-a-dozen War Office clerks in the first week of April. But then I don't myself care for hot-house grapes and pines, the latter of which, to my mind, are only to be had really good in the tropics; whilst as for grapes, I would rather have the commonest bunch fresh plucked from some sunny vine in Spain or Italy, or even Australia, than the finest cluster that ever carried off the first prize at South Kensington or Chiswick. Even the strawberries, though they at least were "native here and to the manner born," lacked the true sun-flavour, and were really not worth a shilling apiece, even to an independent gentleman actually earning his own living at eighty pounds a year. But, after all, it didn't much matter. Uncle Jack heard I had been giving my first dinner-party, and the next time I dined with him at his club pulled the bill out of his pocket, and handed it to me across the table with a grin. I thought one or two of his jests on the occasion—they included, if I remember rightly, a quite unintelligible reference to some "precocious young jackanapes"—hardly showed sufficient appreciation of the dignity of a man earning his own living. But I forgave him. He was always fond of his joke, was Uncle Jack; but he was a good fellow at heart, and—the bill was receipted.

Oimé! It is many a long day now since there was any Uncle Jack to look after the receipting of my bills. And the dinners of nowadays, if they do not cost in proportion quite so much money, are not half the fun that that dinner was, and give a hundred times the trouble. And as for another ball! But here Miss Edith, at seventeen, comes rustling up in all the pride of a "trained skirt"—the first of its kind—and, sweeping me a graceful curtsey, presents me with a little packet of papers, at the top of which is a small pink pamphlet.

There is a moment's silence. Then, glancing up enquiringly, I observe mildly: "My dear! Is not this just a little prema—"

The little pink pamphlet has opened at

page ten. "Wedding breakfast list, calculated for twenty——"

But I am not to get off in that way. The little pink pamphlet is promptly removed from my misguided hands, and as promptly returned, duly opened at the title-page, and plainly proclaiming itself without further flourish as the List of Prices for the Hire of Goods for Parties of all Kinds, from Mr. So-and-so, Ball and Concert-Furnisher, Number So-much, Such-and-such a Street, Latakia Square.

"When we give our next ball, papa," continues Miss Edith, with perfect calmness, and my heart turns to water within me, for I know that I am listening to the voice of fate—"When we give our next ball, papa, you shan't have any more trouble about plate, and furniture, and pulling the house about, and all that. You shall just go down to your office, and mamma will go out for her drive, and Mr. What's-his-name will manage everything without any trouble at all." And therewith miss turns a pirouette, deposits a butterfly kiss on that particular spot on the top of my head where Mr. Tongs had the impertinence the other day to suggest that the 'air was getting very thin, and sweeping another magnificent curtsey, leaves me once more to my meditations, with the little pink pamphlet for their text.

And it must be confessed that when I have recovered my self-possession sufficiently to examine it, Mr. What's-his-name's—I beg pardon; Watts is not his name; but that is Edith's flippant way of speaking—the little pink pamphlet is worth perusal. Mr. Furnisher has doubtless, in some previous existence at all events, been a paterfamilias himself, has had an Edith of his own to issue calm decrees for balls, and garden-parties, and lawn-tennis teas, and all the rest of it, and has now devoted himself to alleviating in some degree the miseries with which he thus learned to sympathise. At all events, he is ready to ensure that whatever may be your troubles in the way of guests who won't come and guests who will be invited; of moons that won't shine, and other parties that won't be interfered with; of rooms that won't fit, and sexes that won't balance, and banker's-books too often troubled with that same unsatisfactory complaint; from any such difficulties as may arise from the mere deficiency of household plenishing you shall be altogether free. It is not everyone—even among those with daughters to

marry and fifty acquaintances of that degree of intimacy which absolutely necessitates their presence at the feast which celebrates that event—who has begun housekeeping life with a store of plate, linen, china, and the like, sufficient for the accommodation of a party of those dimensions. But from all trouble of this kind Mr. Furnisher will save you at a word. There are some housekeepers I know, with marriageable daughters too, who would, I fancy, be sorely puzzled to tell you off-hand even what would be required. Mr. Furnisher has it all at his fingers'-ends. He can tell you the exact proportion due of knives to napkins, of both to forks, and of spoons—table, dessert, ice, salt, and others—to all three. He knows exactly how many “carvers and forks” there should be to every score of carvees, and how many more “large knives and steel forks for carving.” Nay, I make no doubt but that he understands, as I am quite sure I don't, the precise difference between the two. Only half the number of guests, Mr. Furnisher's experience tells him, will drink water or anything of that kind, so only one tumbler will be required to every pair of guests, and only one water-bottle to every five. At dinner, I see, he calculates—no doubt with an eye to the cheese and its accompanying malt, upon a larger consumption of non-vinous fluids, and allows to twenty people not only a clear score of private tumblers, but a general staff of eight water-bottles, each with its own tumbler, and two water-jugs with two goblets apiece. On the other hand he refuses to grant to diners the privileges of wedding-breakfasters in respect of mustard. He is, however, liberal with his salt. The dinner list allows a salt-cellar with its affiliated spoon to every pair of guests; the marriage has, no doubt, sufficient savour of its own, and requires but one to three guests; whilst at the ball-supper, stand-up or sitting-down, the thirst-provoking condiment is still further curtailed. Even the stand-up supper, however, is allowed sixteen per cent. of “salts” and salt-spoons. But against mustard Mr. Furnisher hardens his heart and sets his face everywhere. Fifty people may sit down to supper, but there is only one mustard-pot to each end of the table. If they stand up to their refreshment that supply must suffice for double the number. A wedding-breakfast-party of twenty is only allowed a solitary pot with its accompanying spoon. But it is at dinner that the

Spartan rule is enforced with the strictest severity. A dinner-party of twenty is not allowed any mustard at all!

There are one or two other points, too, about which there seems to hang a slight air of mystery. That the ball-supper list for a hundred persons should only contain in all ninety-eight spoons—sixty-six spoons pure and simple, and thirty-two table ditto—is natural enough. Mr. Furnisher might safely rely upon more than one couple providing their own supply of this favourite article. But I should like to know the statistics on which he bases his estimate for the supply of “champagnes” and “cut wines.” Is a small assembly always more thirsty than a large one, or is a sedentary attitude more suggestive of sparkling stimulant than a perpendicular, or how does he arrive at the conclusion that while every member of a sitting-down party of fifty will go in for Clicquot or Roederer, if the party is doubled and set upon its feet the votaries of these seductive beverages will fall at once to a bare sixty-six per cent.? And where again is that subtle difference between a ball-supper and a wedding-breakfast which, whilst allowing of either being furnished on the same three scales of two shillings, half-a-crown, and three shillings a head, grants to the breakfast-party the privilege of separate chairs at two-and-sixpence, but forbids that luxury at supper-time under any but the highest rate of three shillings.

Still, Mr. Furnisher is a most accommodating individual, and whatever little eccentricities of detail may strike us here and there in his arrangements, there can be no question as to the convenience of those arrangements as a whole. Nor is he by any means blind to considerations of economy. Of course, if you will have so many people to dinner, or breakfast, or supper, you must of necessity, whatever may be the fare set before them, give them so many plates to eat off and so many knives and forks to eat with. But, as Mr. Furnisher points out, while the essentials of an entertainment are fixed, its decorative accidents admit of a certain elasticity of treatment. The wedding breakfast apparatus, for instance, for twenty persons at two shillings a head will include as ample a supply of knives, forks, napkins, plates, glasses, and so forth as either of the more extravagant inventories. But the fourteen dishes of various sizes will have for ornament only a modest pink band. At half-a-crown a head they

will be gorgeous in white and gold. The forty forks will be fiddle pattern, as will no doubt also the twenty dessert and the twenty ice spoons. The extra sixpence will swell them to the massive and gorgeous "kings." The branchless *épergnes* of the florin entertainment will break out into perfect cedars of Lebanon at half-a-crown. And at three shillings we make a yet further advance in luxury. Not only do the humble "cut wines" give place to "engraved," the plain knives to "silver-handled," and the glass saltcellars to "plated salts;" we arrive at the dignity of soup. To what further lengths Mr. Furnisher is prepared, on sufficient pecuniary provocation, to carry us, imagination only can suggest. "No list at a higher rate than three shillings," we are told, is here given; but "special estimates will be sent on receipt of instructions."

Nor does Mr. Furnisher confine his energies to mere knives and forks. You will want a doorway awning, and if you do not want it more than fourteen feet long he will do it for you for the very small sum of one pound. If there is no one among your guests from whom you expect to inherit, he will keep the east wind out altogether by walling the awning in for you at say sixpence per lineal foot. Your balconies must be covered in of course—or what will Romeo and Juliet do in a climate such as ours?—and this little operation can be performed at any price from thirty shillings upwards. Those little square leads outside the staircase window are just the place for a charming little temporary room at, say, three or four pounds or so; and as for the back-yard, or garden, if you have one, why there you are, you know. You may have a dancing cloth strained over the drawing-room carpet if you like, or you may have the carpet up altogether and Mr. Furnisher will stain the floor for you till it looks as like fine old polished oak as gaping Norway deals can. But if you want to do the thing completely, without turning the house topsy-turvy, just give Mr. Furnisher carte blanche and the key of the garden-gate, and then, as Edith says, go down to your office and make your mind easy. By the time you return you will find your new ball-room all cut and dried. Something like a ball-room; none of your flapping, draughty tents with great poles in the middle, but a real weather-tight handsomely-fitted room, say twenty feet wide by five-and-thirty or forty long, and all complete for something less than twenty pounds!

"And, papa!" It is not Miss Edith this time, but a much smaller and less dignified, though, I must confess, a by no means less imperious young personage, who has crept silently in her young ladyship's train, and is now balancing herself recklessly on the arm of my chair, holding on tightly by my coat-collar, just within easy reach—and tinkle—of my left ear. "And, papa!—Oo'll have a Tunjuror."

And a "Tunjuror" I suppose we shall have, though that item of an evening's entertainment does not seem to come within the purview of Mr. Furnisher. Indeed, Miss Edith appears to be thoroughly prepared for this view of the subject also. Not that she has any hankering after conjurors or magic-lanterns, or juvenilities of that kind, all of which she regards as, personally speaking, distinctly *infra dig.* But, as she considerably observes, the children must be thought of, you know, particularly at what Miss Tottie persists in calling "Kiss-miss" time. So this time it is one of Mr. Universal Provider's programmes that is produced for my final discomfiture, and there sure enough are not only Miss Tottie's "Tunjuror," but any number of other delicacies of the season, enough one would think to set up a domestic music-hall for a twelvemonth's season.

Modestly enough does the Universal Provider commence his list with a simple "lady pianiste [five hours] ten shillings and sixpence." A gentleman pianist would up to go the same time costs I find nearly double; but I suppose he hits his instrument a good deal harder, so you get a proportionate amount of music for your money. At all events, if you really mean business, beginning early and keeping it up till near on towards breakfast, you will find the gentleman pianist decidedly the cheaper investment, for he undertakes to play "the whole evening" for a guinea, whereas the weaker vessel, more obnoxious no doubt to the costly influences of wear and tear, costs an additional florin for each additional hour. If you mean, however, to do the thing in style, you will of course have a regular band, and this too the Universal Provider will find you to any number at the moderate charge of one guinea a head.

And now we come to Tottie's part of the programme which begins with fifteen shillings worth of magic-lantern "including nursery tales, natural history, Continental views, comic figures, chromotropes, Chinese fireworks, &c.," a tolerably comprehensive

list occupying about an hour in representation. Ten shillings more converts the simple magic-lantern with its old-fashioned slides into a series of dissolving views set off by all the glories of lime-light, and then we come to Tottie's own "Tunjuror," a wonderful hour's entertainment with dissolving florins, Egyptian packets, Japanese decanters, Chinese pagodas, Hindoo eggs, Java rice tricks, prolific handkerchiefs, crystal disappearances, and other wonders too numerous to recapitulate. Still greater wonders too does the Universal Provider's conjuror appear to have in reserve. For a very slight additional provocation—only an extra sixteen and sixpence—he will prolong his hour's entertainment to an hour and a half "with still more elaborate tricks." Above all, if you are really in search of "a very pleasing way of bringing the evening's entertainment to a brilliant close," he will dazzle your eyes and delight your heart with the magic box trick, which pleasing illusion however, involving a general distribution of toys, &c., can only be introduced at a minimum additional charge of ten shillings, increasing "according to the value of the distribution."

Next comes ventriloquism, in the shape of "an amusing and laughable sketch by Farmer Gobble and his servants," concluding with the farmyard imitation, but with no specified limits as to time. If Farmer Gobble and his servants are to appear, the guinea which is the price of the simpler entertainment becomes thirty-seven and sixpence. Which latter is also the charge for another ventriloquial entertainment under the irresistible title of "Komikal karakters, being a kapital kombination of kuriously kontrived komicalities." Thirty-seven and sixpence too—a favourite sum apparently with the Universal Provider—is the charge for a very decidedly modernised version of our dear old friends Punch and Judy. As for the Marionettes and Fantoccini; Pat and Biddy; Blondin and Scaramouch, the Skeletons, the Contortionists, the Cures; the Jugglers, Pole Balancers, Celestial Dancers, Stilt Performers, Chair Equilibrists, and last not least, that most wonderful of all outcomes of the Eastern Question, the Compound Turk; if that sixteenth half-crown which the too Spartan virtue of the Universal Provider so rigidly foregoes could screw their kindly voices one semitone nearer the proper concert pitch of this festive season, they should have their round forty shillings

and welcome. But I draw the line at "Mr. Punch on Horseback." No, Mr. Universal Provider, not for a moment. You shall provide me anything you and Miss Edith please, from a lady pianiste [five hours] to a "troupe of niggers, five in number, with instrumentalists, vocalists, jigs, American breakdowns," &c., but I cannot let you provide, at my expense or under my sanction, a nag for Mr. Punch.

And really there is no need for any such outrage on the proprieties. We have gone through a tolerably comprehensive programme already, and we are not yet nearly through the list of legitimate entertainments. There are the Marionette Minstrels, "quite a superior entertainment," so impressive indeed in their superiority that the universal one has actually made up his mind to accept on their behalf that long-repudiated sixteenth half-crown. And there is juggling, with all its wonders of "Indian and Japanese balancing with knives, rings, plates, balls, swords, &c.; concluding with King Coffee's Umbrella." King Cetewayo, I suppose, had no umbrella, or the Universal Provider would certainly have provided that too for our universal delectation. And there are the performing dogs, suitable—we are not told why, but I conclude that it is on account of a certain boisterousness in their manners, a want of high breeding, no doubt—for schools only. And the performing birds, mice, and cats, of sedate, not to say demure, habits. And there are duettists, and mystic changes, and laughable sketches of everyday life; and, for the matter of that, no doubt a menagerie, if you have a mind for it, with a seal and a whale and a Bengal tiger, and a white elephant, perhaps, to boot; for the Universal Provider prides himself on the universality of his provision, and will think no more of wiring to his Burmese correspondent for half-a-dozen or so of lively young man-eaters than of laying-on a lady pianiste [five hours] for half-a-guinea, with two shillings per hour "overtime."

So if the lamb—I am the lamb—is to be shorn, there will be some tempering of the wind at all events. Indeed, as Miss Edith says, there is really nothing for me to trouble about at all—except, of course, just paying the bill. "And that, you know," sedately observes her young ladyship, by way of final and clinching consolation—"That you know, papa, must have been done anyhow."

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA.

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA was first printed in 1609, when two editions of the play were published, differing, however, only in regard to their title-pages, and in that to one issue a preface was added, apparently the work of the publisher, headed by the words: "A neuer writer to an euer reader. Newes." The play is in this preface specially described as a new one "neuer stal'd with the Stage, neuer clapper-clawd with the palmes of the vulgar;" and the price of the publication was stated to be "a testern," or sixpence—no such very small charge, the relative value of the money in Shakespeare's time being borne in mind. One edition—authorities differ as to which should properly be accounted the first—has the following title: "The famous Historie of Troylus and Cresseid. Excellently expressing the beginning of their loves, with the conceited wooing of Pandarus, Prince of Licia. Written by William Shakespeare. London: Imprinted by G. Eld for R. Bonian and H. Walley, and are to be sold at the Spred Eagle in Paule's Church Yeard, ouer against the great north doore, 1609." The title of the other edition runs thus: "The Historie of Troylus and Cresseida. As it was acted by the King's Maiesties seruants at the Globe. Written by William Shakespeare," &c.

From an entry in the Stationers' Registers, February 7, 1602-3, it appears that a play called Troilus and Cressida had then been acted by the Lord Chamberlain's servants; and this, Mr. Staunton conjectures, may have been the play on which Decker and Chettle are known from Henslowe's Diary to have been engaged in 1599, and which possibly formed the groundwork of Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida. The play by Decker and Chettle, however, has not come down to us; nothing is known of it, indeed, save that it once existed. In the folio of 1623 Troilus and Cressida stands between the histories and the tragedies.

Dryden regarding Shakespeare's play as "one of his first endeavours on the stage," proceeds to describe the original story as "written by one Lollius, a Lombard, in Latin verse, and translated by Chaucer into English; intended, I suppose, a satire on the inconstancy of women; I find nothing of it among the ancients; not so much as the name Cressida once mentioned." Shakespeare without doubt had recourse to the Troilus and Cresseid of Chaucer; that he knew anything of Lollius

and his Latin verses is less likely. But, as Mr. Carew Hazlitt points out, the play is tri-partite and embraces three legends: Troilus and Cressida, Hector and Achilles, Ajax and Agamemnon; so that Shakespeare clearly sought other aid than Chaucer's, and "unless he found it ready done to his hand in the foundation-play, may have resorted to Chapman's then new version of Homer." Johnson, it may be noted, held the presence of Thersites in the play to be a proof that Chapman's Homer was known to Shakespeare.

There is little of Homeric sentiment, however, in Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida. Schlegel observes of the play that it is "one continued irony of that crown of all heroic tales, the tale of Troy," and maintains that the poet had not the Iliad before him, but only the chivalrous romances derived from Dares Phrygius, whose spurious history of the siege of Troy, first published at Milan in 1477, was a current and credited manuscript in the middle ages. In this Latin work were contained the love intrigues which appear so conspicuously in the Shakespearean play, or "heroic comedy," as Schlegel describes it. "Let no man conceive that any indignity was intended to the venerable Homer," he urges, while adding that, with the possible exception of Hector, none of the characters were designed by Shakespeare to be worthy of sympathy or regard. "It seems as if he here for once wished, without caring for theatrical effect, to satisfy the nicety of his peculiar wit and the inclination to a certain guile, if I may say so, in the characterisation." That in this play the poet disdained theatrical effect seems also to have been the opinion of Hazlitt, who accounts it "the most loose and desultory" of all his works: "It rambles on just as it happens, but it overtakes, together with some indifferent matter, a prodigious number of fine things in its way." Coleridge, however, sees nothing of irony in Shakespeare's intention, or loose and desultory in his workmanship, but puts forth a theory of his own in explanation of the play's peculiarities: "I am half inclined to believe that Shakespeare's main object (or shall I rather say his ruling impulse?) was to translate the poetic heroes of Paganism into the not less rude, but more intellectually vigorous and more featurely, warriors of Christian chivalry, and to substantiate the distinct and graceful profiles or outlines of the Homeric epic into the

flesh and blood of the romantic drama—in short, to give a grand history-piece in the robust style of Albert Durer.”

The theme was, no doubt, popular enough; it may be questioned, however, whether the play ever secured any considerable share of public favour. There are no records or traditions of the early performances of *Troilus and Cressida*; it seems never to have been selected for representation in the presence of royalty; no mention of it has been found in connection with the names of the players of Shakespeare's time. Burbadge may have been the first *Troilus*; but the character is not included in the list of the parts he is alleged to have played. Moreover, the re-opening of the theatres at the Restoration did not forthwith bring back *Troilus and Cressida* to the stage. Even Dryden's alteration of the play was not presented at the theatre in Dorset Gardens until 1679; and, except in the new form given it by Dryden, the play has since enjoyed no existence upon the stage. There has, indeed, been no revival at any time of the original text; and probably *Troilus and Cressida*, as Shakespeare wrote it, has not been seen in the theatre since Shakespeare's own day.

Dryden, by way of justifying the operation he performed upon the play, finds much fault with it. He alleges that the English language had become so much more refined since Shakespeare's time “that many of his words and more of his phrases are scarce intelligible; and of those which we understand, some are ungrammatical, others coarse; and his whole style is so pestered with figurative expressions, that it is as affected as it is obscure.” He admits that in his later plays “he had worn off somewhat of the rust,” but *Troilus and Cressida* was a play produced “in the apprenticeship of his writing,” and left in a very lame and incorrect state, carelessly printed and undivided into acts. The author had begun it with some fire: “The characters of Pandarus and Thersites are promising enough, but as if he grew weary of his task, after an entrance or two he lets them fall, and the latter part of the tragedy is nothing but a confusion of drums and trumpets, excursions and alarms.” Dryden further complains that the chief persons who give its name to the tragedy are left alive at its close; that *Cressida* is false and yet not punished. “Yet, after all,” he is kind enough to add, “because the play was Shakespeare's, and that there appeared

in some places of it the admirable genius of the author, I undertook to remove that heap of rubbish under which many excellent thoughts lay wholly buried. Accordingly I new-modelled the plot; threw out many unnecessary persons; improved those characters which were begun and left unfinished, as Hector, *Troilus*, *Pandarus*, and *Thersites*, and added that of *Andromache*.” The adapter also credits himself with no small trouble in ordering and connecting the scenes, removing them from the places where they were inartificially set, and giving them more coherence: “no leaping from *Troy* to the Grecian tents and thence back again in the same act, but a due proportion of time allowed for every motion.” Of another alteration he writes: “I need not say that I have refined his language, which before was obsolete; but I am willing to acknowledge that as I have often drawn his English nearer to our times, so I have sometimes conformed my own to his; and consequently the language is not altogether so pure as it is significant.”

In Dryden's first act the scenes are transposed, so that the play commences with the debate of the Grecian chiefs, and the speeches are much condensed; little new matter, however, is introduced. Throughout the play it is to be observed that where Dryden found the text gross he was at pains to leave it grosser. He did not hold Shakespeare obsolete in regard to his more licentious passages. Dryden, indeed, to gratify the impurity of his public, aggravated the coarseness of his original. Certainly it was not to produce a chaster play that he undertook to alter *Troilus and Cressida*.

The second act of the adaptation begins with the second scene of the second act of the original: a room in *Priam's* palace. But even when some regard has been shown for the text, it is subjected to much minute tampering. *Priam's* speech should commence:

After so many hours, lives, speeches spent,
Thus once again says Nestor from the Greeks:
“Deliver Helen and all damage else—
As honour, loss of time, travel, expense,
Wounds, friends, and what else dear that is consumed
In hot digestion of this cormorant war—
Shall be struck off:” Hector what say you to 't?

In Dryden this is altered and reduced to:

After the expense of so much time and blood
Thus once again the Grecians send to Troy:
Deliver Helen, and all other loss
Shall be forgotten. Hector, what say you to 't?

Cassandra does not appear; but Andromache is introduced, and Dryden lays claim to the greater part of the act. He writes: "The scenes of Pandarus and Cressida, of Troilus and Pandarus, of Andromache with Hector and the Trojans, in the second act, are wholly new, together with that of Nestor and Ulysses with Thersites, and that of Thersites with Ajax and Achilles." The third act is mainly Shakespeare's, with a new scene added at the suggestion of Betterton, imitative of the grand scene between Brutus and Cassius, or, rather, between Melantius and Amintor in *The Maid's Tragedy* of Beaumont and Fletcher. Langbaine describes this addition as "a masterpiece; whether it be copied from Shakespeare, Fletcher, or Euripides, or all of them, I think it justly deserves commendation." Dryden, in regard to the charge of imitation, had alleged that "if Shakespeare's scene or that faulty copy of it in Amintor and Melantius had never been, yet Euripides had furnished an excellent example between Agamemnon and Menelaus; and from thence, indeed, the last turn of it is borrowed." It is certain, however, that many passages in the speeches of Amintor and Melantius are closely imitated. Betterton's Melantius was a famous performance; and he well knew the theatrical value of a quarrel scene; and how much his own part of Troilus would in such wise be strengthened. In the fourth act Dryden mitigates the guilt of Cressida; she is supposed, upon the counsel of Calchas, only to pretend love for Diomed, although Troilus is allowed to believe her really false; but the concluding scenes between Pandarus and Troilus, and a quarrel scene between Diomed and Troilus, are entirely Dryden's. Nor is there much of Shakespeare in the last act. Andromache, scared by her dreams of battle and slaughter, prevails upon Hector to stay from the conflict, but he yields presently to the expostulations of Troilus, and goes with him to the field. The Trojans attack the Grecian camp, and the adaptation vies with the original in regard to drumming and trumpeting, alarms and excursions, clattering and clashing of arms. The Grecians fly across the stage pursued by the Trojans, headed by Hector and Troilus. Thersites exhibits great cowardice, but Troilus spares his life upon his leading the way to the tent of Calchas, wherein Diomed and Cressida are to be found. Achilles, mourning the loss of Patroclus, and vow-

ing vengeance against Hector, enters with his myrmidons. Diomed is worsted in a combat with Troilus, and resigns to him Cressida. But Troilus, believing her false, curses her vehemently:

Oh, torment! Now hell's bluest flames
Receive her quick; with all her crimes upon her
Let her sink spotted down. Let the dark host
Make room and point, and hiss her as she goes.
Let the most branded ghost of all her sex
Rejoice and cry, Here comes a blacker fiend!

Cressida interrupts him by stabbing herself. Troilus meditates suicide, but, seeing Diomed smile, turns angrily upon him. The stage direction follows: "Troilus and Diomed fight, and both parties engage at the same time. The Trojans make the Greeks retire, and Troilus makes Diomed give ground, and hurts him. Trumpets sound. Achilles enters with his myrmidons, on the backs of the Trojans, who fight in a ring, encompassed round: Troilus singling Diomed, gets him down and kills him; and Achilles kills Troilus upon him. All the Trojans die upon the place, Troilus last." The death of Hector is not accomplished upon the stage. Agamemnon, Nestor, Menelaus, Ulysses, Ajax, and attendants enter, interchanging congratulations, and conclude the play; Ulysses delivering the final couplet, which points a moral applicable rather to the period of the Restoration than to Homeric times:

Then since from home-bred factions ruin springs,
Let subjects learn obedience to their kings.

Some few years before, Dryden, in his *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, had condemned "the tumult to which we are subject in England by representing duels, battles, and the like; which renders the stage much like the theatre where they fight prizes. For what is more ridiculous than to represent an army with a drum and five men behind it, all which the hero of the other side is to drive in before him? or to see a duel fought, and one slain with two or three thrusts at the foils, which we know are so blunted that we might give a man an hour to kill a man in good earnest with them?" And he adds his observation that "in all our tragedies the audience cannot forbear laughing when the actors are to die; 'tis the most comic part of the whole play. All passions may be lively represented on the stage if to the well writing of them the actor supplies a good-commanded voice and limbs that move easily, and without stiffness; but there are many actions

which can never be imitated to a just height. Dying is especially a thing which none but a Roman gladiator could naturally perform on the stage, when he did not imitate or represent, but do it; and, therefore, it is better to omit the representation of it." In his *Essay on Heroic Plays*, however, apology is found for his "frequent use of drums and trumpets and representations of battles," in disregard of his own precepts. "I introduced them not," he urges; "Shakespeare used them frequently; and though Johnson shows no battle in his *Cataline*, yet you hear from behind the scenes sounding of trumpets and the shouts of fighting armies." And he adds that these sights and sounds "are no more than is necessary to produce the effects of an heroic play; that is, to raise the imagination of the audience and to persuade them for the time that what they behold in the theatre is really performed."

The prologue to Dryden's *Troilus and Cressida*, or *Truth Found Too Late*, was spoken by Betterton "representing the ghost of Shakespeare," and commences:

See, my loved Britons, see your Shakespeare rise,
An awful ghost confessed to human eyes.

Untaught, unpractised, in a barbarous age,
I found not, but created first the stage.
And, if I drained no Greek or Latin store,
'Twas that my own abundance gave me more.

The ghost then speaks of his "rough-drawn" play, and promises the spectators they shall behold "some master-strokes."

He censures the poets of the time:

Weak short-liv'd issues of a feeble age,
Scarce living to be christened on the stage!
For humour farce, for love they rhyme dispense,
That tolls the knell for their departed sense.

And concludes:

Sit silent then, that my pleased soul may see
A judging audience once and worthy me:
My faithful scene from true records shall tell
How Trojan valour did the Greek excell;
Your great fore-fathers shall their fame regain
And Homer's angry Ghost repine in vain.

It must be confessed that this ghost talked much more like Dryden than Shakespeare. Betterton, however, was famous as a speaker of prologues. As Cibber writes: "In the delivery of a good prologue Betterton had a natural gravity that gave strength to good sense; a tempered spirit that gave life to wit; and a dry reserve in his smile that threw ridicule into its brightest colours." As *Troilus* Betterton was supported by the Hector of William Smith, an esteemed actor, who had been a barrister originally, and whose zealous attachment to the interests of James the

Second led him subsequently to join the army of that prince as a volunteer. He was distinguished as the original representative of Chamont in Otway's *Orphan*; of young Marius in Otway's *Caius Marius*, an adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*; of Sir Fopling Flutter, in Etherege's *Man of the Mode*; of Edgar in Tate's version of *King Lear*; of Scandal in Congreve's *Love for Love*. Mrs. Betterton appeared as *Andromache*, and the part of *Cressida* was played by Mrs. Mary Lee, an actress who in 1681 seems to have become the wife or widow of a knight or baronet. She was thenceforward until 1685, when she quitted the stage, described in the play-bill as "*Lady Slingsby*." The characters of *Pandarus* and *Thersites* were represented by the admired comedians, Leigh and Cave Underhill. According to the custom of the time a comic epilogue followed the tragedy. This was spoken by the performer of *Thersites*, still maintaining that character, and begins:

These cruel critics put me into passion,
For in their lowering looks I read damnation:
You expect a satire, and I seldom fail;
When I'm first beaten, 'tis my part to rail, &c.

Genest, in his *History of the Stage*, accounts Dryden's adaptation as "on the whole a good one, but not near so good as a man of his abilities might have made it;" and he specially points out the error of allowing *Troilus* to kill *Diomed*, "contrary to what every schoolboy knows to be fact." Of the original play Genest, at all times a prompt and candid critic, untroubled by any excess of veneration for his subject, says that it is inferior to most of Shakespeare's tragedies: "There are several fine speeches, but the language is often inflated and obscure; mention is absurdly made of Aristotle, Milo and the Olympian wrestling, and the catastrophe is lame to the last degree." And the judgment of Tyrwhitt is cited, who in his observations on Shakespeare, 1766, avers that there are more hard bombastical phrases in the serious scenes of *Troilus* and *Cressida* than in any other six plays of Shakespeare.

Dryden's adaptation reappeared upon the stage at Drury Lane in 1709. Betterton, now thirty years older, undertook the character of *Thersites*, resigning *Troilus* to Wilks. Barton Booth personated *Achilles*, Powell Hector, and Estcourt *Pandarus*. *Cressida* was played by Mrs. Bradshaw, a valued actress who had appeared upon the stage quite as a child, and whose exemplary and prudent conduct led to her quitting

the stage in 1714 to become the happy wife of Martin Folkes, Esq., a gentleman of a very considerable estate. "Such has been her behaviour to him," writes Curll in 1741, "that there is not a more happy couple." She was the original representative of Corinna in *The Confederacy*, Dorinda in *The Beaux's Stratagem*, and Sylvia in *The Double Gallant*. The *Andromache* was Mrs. Rogers, of whom it was said that in her younger days she carried her theatrical prudery to such a height that she was content only to represent virtuous characters. Her career as an actress ceased in 1719. In 1712 she was the occasion of a riot at Drury Lane. She believed herself entitled to the part of *Andromache* in *The Distressed Mother*, which the management had assigned to Mrs. Oldfield. Thereupon the jealous actress "raised a posse of profligates, fond of tumult and riot, who made such a commotion in the house that the Court hearing of it sent four of the royal messengers and a strong guard to suppress all disorders." In 1714 she quitted Drury Lane and joined Rich's company at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields.

Later performances of Dryden's *Troilus* and *Cressida* took place in 1720, when Ryan appeared as *Troilus*, Bullock as *Thersites*, Spiller as *Pandarus*, and Quin as *Hector*. Two years afterwards the play was reproduced for the benefit of the comedian Hippiisley, who essayed the character of *Pandarus*. Quin now played *Thersites*, and Tom Walker, soon to be famous as the first Captain Macheath, personated *Ulysses*. The *Hector* of the night was *Boheme*, the *Cressida* Mrs. *Boheme*, the *Andromache* Mrs. Bullock. In 1733 Rich revived the play at Covent Garden, Ryan and Quin resuming their old parts of *Troilus* and *Thersites*; but Walker had now resigned *Ulysses* to appear as *Hector*. Davies in his *Dramatic Miscellanies* writes of the performance: "Walker acted *Hector* with his usual spirit and animated action; *Troilus* fell to Ryan's share; Quin was esteemed an admirable *Thersites*; and Hippiisley excited much mirth in *Pandarus*. Mrs. Buchanan, a very fine woman and a pleasing actress, who died soon after in childhood, was the *Cressida*. Mr. Lacy, late manager of Drury Lane, acted *Agamemnon*; and Tom Chapman pleased himself with the obstreperous and discordant utterance of *Diomed's* passion for *Cressida*."

It does not appear that Dryden's adaptation enjoyed performance in any subsequent season.

SET IN A SILVER SEA.

BY B. L. FARJEON.

THE PROLOGUE.

THE LEGEND OF THE SILVER ISLE.

PART I. THE SIN.

THIS precious stone, set in a silver sea, was an island, from which a bird might fly to England's shore and back within the limits of the shortest day. A most precious jewel, graced with loveliest form and colour; on one side rock-bound, plashed day and night by snowy spray and foam, and, on the other, lying asleep in a bed of velvet sand, over which the salt waves idled and murmured sweetest dreams. It was Nature's holiday ground. The valleys were summer-warm long after summer had passed away, and as one lifted one's head to the beautiful sky, the sun's bright rays shone upon the face, while the crisp fresh air, with a taste of mountain snow in its breath, kissed brow and lip. The seasons were in sweet rivalry. Sometimes even in December the eye would light upon a wonder—young blades of grass of tenderest green peeping from the earth, as though Spring's wondrous birth were near; while on the north side of the Silver Isle, where rock and peak were nearest to heaven, lay a basin of eternal snow, its white bosom gleaming in the sun's eye from year's end to year's end.

On the breast of the loftiest range in the Silver Isle, seven thousand feet above the level of the sea, rested this basin of eternal snow, soft, and still, and treacherous. The road to it lay over sharp rocks and dangerous surprises formed by chasm and precipice, into many of which a ray of sunlight had never wandered. The islanders avoided it in terror. On moonlight nights they would point fearsomely to the shadows gliding over the white surfaces, never for a moment still, ever changing with the changing aspect of the moon as the clouds passed across its face; and, walking in the plains and valleys, would cross themselves as a protection against the evil spirits that haunted the spot and held unholy revel there. From their youngest days they were warned never to attempt to reach the snow-land that looked so fair and pure. "Sin is there," they were told, "and Death. Its bosom is stained with blood. Who ventures there is lost." On stormy nights, when the heavens were black, their imaginations conjured up dread shadows moving

on the heights, and, sitting by their firesides, parents would relate to their children strange stories of the mysterious world that almost touched the sky, and the little ones would tremble, and hide their faces in their frocks at the sound of thunder pealing over the mountain tops. Then, mayhap, a lull in the storm would occur, and the mothers would say:

"Be not frightened, children. The storm has ceased. Evil flies from the presence of the White Maiden. She is on the mountain."

These stories, handed down from generation to generation, lost nothing of the fantastic in their transmission. They grew like the spreading of circles on the surface of a peaceful lake, and gathered weird terrors from the spirit world which surrounds the real. The islanders believed in the supernatural; in their primitive life the invisible was a power from which rare streams of fancy flowed. Spirits lived in the mountains, and haunted their woods and streams; and Nature's voice, heard in wind or breeze, in the hushed harmony of forest life or the sweet plashing of the mountain rill, in drowsy lullaby or the fierce contention of the elements, was pregnant with significant meaning. Apart from these poetical currents, the Silver Isle was rich in themes of passion and suffering, and the legend connected with the basin of snow had its origin in a seed sown by human hands.

How many years ago no man could say, for the deed lived only in the memory, and was not witnessed by the oldest grey-beard among them, an unforeseen and fearful crime was committed in the isle. In that little world were two men who, by force of natural gifts, grew to be like kings in the land. The influence they wielded over the community was unbounded. Famous were they for their strength and beauty, for their knowledge of husbandry, for the love they bore each other. They were the idols of the island, and gave the word when to sow, when to reap, when to gather in the harvest. Questions of moment were submitted to them for decision. All men yielded to them, followed them, obeyed them. Their word was law, and their power was maintained, not by the strong hand, but by gentleness and wisdom. Their house of pine wood was set on the crown of a hill, above the valleys in which the warm winds lingered. It seemed right that they should live apart from their fellows. They were the eagles

of the isle, bright-eyed, strong-limbed, and long enduring. In hunting, shooting, and feats of endurance they were the masters of all. The land around their house had been cleared and made arable by their own strong hands, and in a community of able tillers they were renowned for their skill with the plough.

Celibacy was not uncommon in the Silver Isle; and for that reason, and because the moral stature of the brothers was so far above that of their fellows, it was not a matter for wonder that they had not found their mates among women. For their sakes many women remained single, unblessed, and uncomplaining, for the brothers trifled with no maiden's affections. But it is not for men to lay down a law for themselves in this respect; nature is not to be denied, and when the brothers had passed their fourth decade, the spirit of love touched their hearts. It proved their destruction. They were both drawn to a lovely girl of eighteen summers, an orphan, who exercised an almost magic power over the islanders. As the brothers were the heroes, so Evangeline was the heroine of the Silver Isle. Universally beloved, she brought happiness to the young and comfort to the old. She was not conscious at first of the passion which possessed the brothers, nor that the irresistible influence of her sweet nature, no less than that of her beauty, made these strong men weaker in her presence than the weakest reed. Her soul was the soul of a chaste and modest maiden, and her conduct was innocent and pure. Truly her heart was bound to the elder of the brothers, and the time came when the lovers stood hand in hand, bathed in the light of the sunrise of love.

"Rejoice with me, my brother," said the chosen one. "Blessed as my life has been, it is now to be doubly blessed. Evangeline is mine."

"Thine!" exclaimed the younger brother, with a haggard look.

For him, in that fatal moment, the world grew dark. But one bright star remained—the guileless maid who raised her face to his to receive a brother's kiss. All other light was blotted out.

He kissed her with lips as cold as snow, and she stood between the brothers with unwavering faith in both.

"You are my brother now," said Evangeline, gazing with innocent trust into the face of the younger man.

"Aye," he answered in a hoarse voice.

"Then," said the happy lover, "if aught

befall me, my brother, thou wilt protect Evangeline."

"To the death."

This was a sacred custom in the isle. One brother dead, the other remained to comfort the bereaved heart—with a husband's love, if it were so agreed.

When it became known that the elder brother had chosen Evangeline for his mate, the hearts of the islanders were filled with gladness. "The race of heroes will not now die out," they said. Fêtes were held to celebrate the approaching union of one of the heroes of the Silver Isle with the loveliest maiden who had ever graced it. It was a time of universal rejoicing. The wedding-day arrived—a fair and sunny day. Smiles were on every lip; the houses and the church were bright with flowers. In the morning the bridegroom's brother presented himself at the house of the bride to conduct her to the church. He gave her the bridal flowers, and she placed them in her bosom and in her hair. Her waist was engirdled with white roses. Her heart was a garden of sweet thoughts. They walked to the church, followed by the islanders, who made this day a general holiday. By right the bridegroom should have been in the portal of the sacred house to receive his bride, but he was absent. The sun-dial marked the appointed time, and the man who should have been the first to arrive did not make his appearance. It was strange, for he had never been a laggard. His brother was questioned.

"What detains him?"

"I know not."

"Saw you him this morning?"

"No. I saw him last at midnight. He said he wished to be alone, to commune with his heart and with God. Such would have been my desire had his happy lot been mine. We kissed and parted."

"He was well?"

"He was well."

"Whither went he?"

"I cannot say."

"In what direction?"

"In the direction of the snow mountain."

At the words "Such would have been my desire, had his happy lot been mine," Evangeline suddenly turned her eyes towards him. Some unaccustomed note in his voice had strangely moved her; but only on her ears had it fallen with significance. She did not speak.

No other man in the Silver Isle had information to give. Many on the previous

night had seen the brothers depart from the valleys with their arms around each other, embracing. They walked towards the heights in loving converse, as they had often done in the bygone time.

The day waned, and still no bridegroom. The islanders stood about in clusters, endeavouring to account for his absence. They sent scouts in search of him, who returned unaccompanied and unsatisfied; no trace of him could be discovered. The islanders questioned Evangeline. She did not hear their first words. Her eyes wore an inward look; she was searching the past for new meanings to words, gestures, glances, which, at the time they were given, seemed capable only of honest construction. She was as one in a troubled dream.

"Evangeline, listen to us."

"Ah, pardon me! What do you wish to say to me?"

"You know no cause why your bridegroom should not be here?"

"I know of none. God may; I do not."

"All was well between you?"

"He never spoke ungentle word to me, nor I to him. There was nothing concealed between us, nothing to be concealed. I knew his heart; he knew mine. Dear friends, my trouble is great."

They turned to the brother again.

"Last night, when you parted from him, he said he would be here to-day?"

"Assuredly. To be united with this sweet flower who was to bring heaven into his life." He might have added, "and hell into mine!" but he kept his thought close.

Yet it seemed as though Evangeline had some consciousness of it. She looked into his face for a moment. He returned her look with a wild and tender smile, and with the words:

"He will come."

She drew him aside, so that no other ears could hear what passed between them.

"Are you sure?"

"I would—from the grave. He will come, if he love you as you deserve to be loved."

"Did he not so love me? Ah, me!"

"Did he not so love me?"

He made no answer, but peered around into the air, expecting a presence that was not among them. Again she looked into his face. Again he returned her look with a wild and tender smile.

"Have you a secret?" she asked, in a whisper.

"Yes. A heart secret."

"Can I read it?"

He replied with a sigh that was like a groan. He held her hand in his. Hers was cold as ice; his, hot as flame.

The day drew its slow and mournful length. A gloom like a funereal pall fell upon the isle. The islanders made many efforts to induce Evangeline to accompany them home; she would not yield to their entreaties. "We will stay yet a little while," she said, and "yet a little while," again and again. Evening came; the western skies were stained with blood. It was useless to stay longer. Evangeline's friends made a last effort to lead her away, but she still refused to quit the church.

"I must stay here," she said.

"Alone? Dear child, be persuaded; come with us!"

"I must stay. I shall not be alone." She spoke now to the brother. "You will not leave me?"

"I will never leave you!"

Faded flowers lay about her feet. Her friends still lingered, but she entreated them to go.

"Am I not in safe hands? Here stands my brother, who will protect me from harm. Go, dear friends; it will be best. God tells me it will be for the best. Good night!"

"Good night, Evangeline! Dear child of our hearts, good night! We shall watch and pray for you. All will be well to-morrow."

They pressed her in their arms, and kissed and embraced her; then slowly left the place, with many a fond and lingering look behind. When night fell, only Evangeline and the younger brother were in the church. For a long time there was silence. No sound was heard within those sacred walls until the man heard a voice cry:

"Cain!"

He replied with a shudder:

"Who calls?"

Again he heard the voice:

"Where is thy brother?"

"I know not. Am I my brother's keeper?"

And in those familiar words, uttered in a tone of suppressed agony, upon the girl's affrighted soul flashed the awful truth, of which, indeed, she had already a vague foreshadowing. She heard not the questions, for they proceeded from no human tongue. It was the man's conscience that had spoken in the dread stillness of the night.

Only for a few moments did Evangeline's heart faint within her. Her hand slipped

from the man's grasp, and she sank to the ground in a passion of silent grief and horror. Then she bit her lips until the blood came, and rose and stood close beside him.

"Evangeline," he whispered, "have you aught else to say? I am ready to answer."

He had a pitiless desire to be questioned. The torture of his secret was almost too great for him to bear.

"I have said nothing," she replied. "I have not spoken."

"Whose voice, then, did I hear?"

"If you heard any," she said, "it was God's."

"So be it. Evangeline, are you very unhappy?"

"Most unhappy."

"You must be tired. It has been a weary day."

"A day never, never to be forgotten in this world or the next! I did not come prepared. The flowers you brought me are still in my bosom. What mockery! What mockery!"

"You are not afraid of me?"

"No, I am not afraid of you."

"Why did you elect to remain here with me?"

"To hear your confession."

"Listen to it. I love you! I love you!"

"Ah, me! Is love a poison, then?"

"I love you! No man ever loved woman as I love you! No woman can ever again be loved as you are loved! Time and the worlds contain for me but one hope—Evangeline!"

All the passion of which man's nature is capable was expressed in this utterance. It was as though the man had said: "My salvation is in your hands. My crime was yours." It that sense she accepted it.

"Come," she said, "and let me see of what I have been guilty. If there is blood upon my soul I must face it."

"What would you do?"

"I would know the truth. I would see the truth. Come, Cain, and show me my crime."

He accepted with a ghastly smile the name by which she called him. Had he not already answered to it? They walked into the open. There was a glimmering light in the sky; the moon had not yet risen. He gazed into Evangeline's face, and its pallid beauty pierced his heart like a sharp knife.

"Does my misery hurt you?" she

asked. "I am sorry. You must already have suffered much."

The hapless girl's voice expressed such utter desolation that a terrible yearning took possession of him to console her. He held out his arms entreatingly to her.

"Evangeline," he cried, "trust me with your future. Find comfort here."

A gasp of most exquisite suffering escaped her. With her open palm upon his breast, she kept him from embracing her.

"Teach me first to forget," she said; and then she asked plaintively: "Why have you loved me?"

"Why are we glad when we see the sun?"

"There are so many better than I, more worthy of you, closer to you in wisdom and strength. I am neither wise nor strong; I am but a poor unfortunate girl, born to destroy."

"Born to bless, to save! In all this world, there moves not a being so fair, so beautiful."

"And believing thus, you loved me."

"Accept it so."

"If," she said solemnly, "my beauty has ensnared you, you must not be condemned for it. I am truly most guilty. Lend me your tablets."

He handed them to her. She wrote a few words upon them, and entering the church, laid them on the altar, and afterwards rejoined him.

"You know that your brother loved you with a most perfect love."

"So loved I him, until——"

"Until," she said, with a wild sob, "I stepped between you, and led you to destruction. Ah! how he worshipped you! You were the incarnation of all that was noble; you were the embodiment of a divine beauty and strength by whose example men were led nearer to their Creator. All that was base and sordid withered at your touch. You were his hero, his angel, upon whose lightest word he would have staked a thousand lives, had they been his to lose. He taught me to look up to you as I do to God. Truly I revered you. In all our plans, in all our hopes, for the future you were the first. You were to guide us in all things. 'If any crisis in your life occurs,' your brother said to me, 'and I am not near, place your hand in my brother's hand. He will shelter and protect you, as I would do.

Have full faith in him, in his bravery, in his heroism. What is right to be done he will do, at whatever risk, for your sake and mine.' I have treasured his words. A crisis in my unhappy life has come, and your brother is not here. I place my hand in yours. I have full faith in you. You will do what is right to be done."

"Demand it of me. I will do it."

"Take me, step by step, over the ground you and your brother walked last night. Do not fear. I shall not faint by the way."

A strong man's strength seemed to have entered the body of the weak and fragile girl. There was no faltering in her steps as, hand in hand, they walked together towards the mountain of snow. The unfrequented route they traversed was marked by falling leaves from the bridal flowers in her bosom and hair, and now and then she plucked a rose from her girdle and scattered its leaves upon the road. Onward they walked, steadily, unrelentingly. Only once did they look back. They were on the heights, and paused, prompted by Evangeline.

"It was from this point," she said, "our dear friends below saw you and your brother clearly, with your arms round each other's neck, embracing. It was a brighter night than this, but if they are looking this way they can distinguish our forms, and they will know by our quiet attitude that we are outwardly in harmony with each other."

She gazed wistfully upon the houses of the islanders which dotted the plains and valleys beneath. Her own cot was within view, lighted up more brilliantly than usual, to woo her back to peace and home. She knew the sign, and answered the pathetic entreaty expressed in the lights.

"Never again! Oh, never, never again!" and then she breathed the word "Farewell!"

NOW READY,
"SWEET NELLY, MY HEART'S
DELIGHT."

BY WALTER BESANT AND JAMES RICE,
AUTHORS OF
"When the Ship Comes Home," "Twas in Trafalgar's
Bay," &c., &c.

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